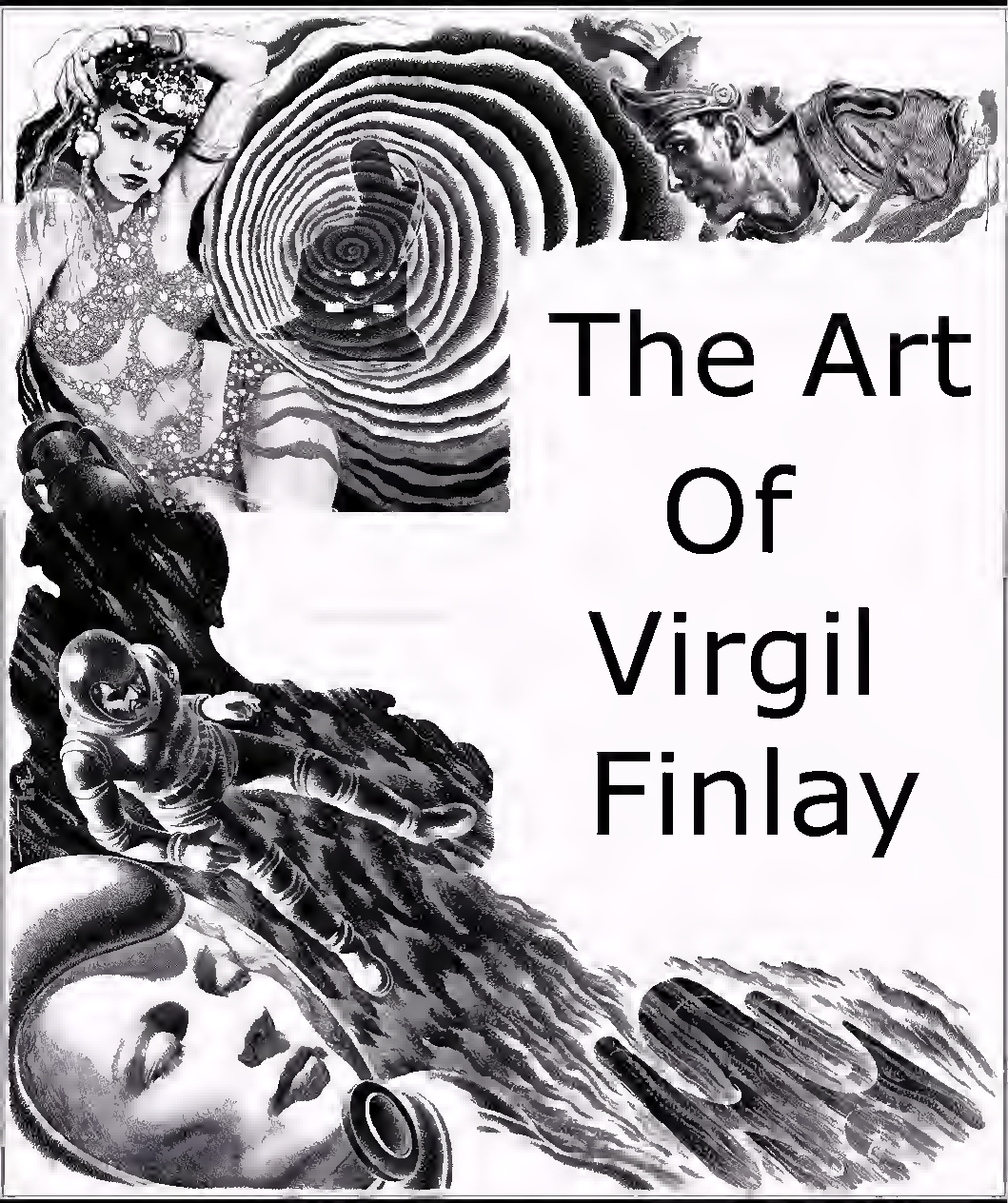
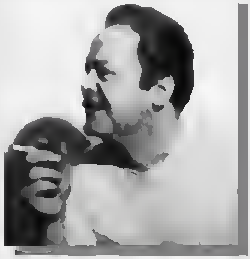


The Art Of Virgil Finlay

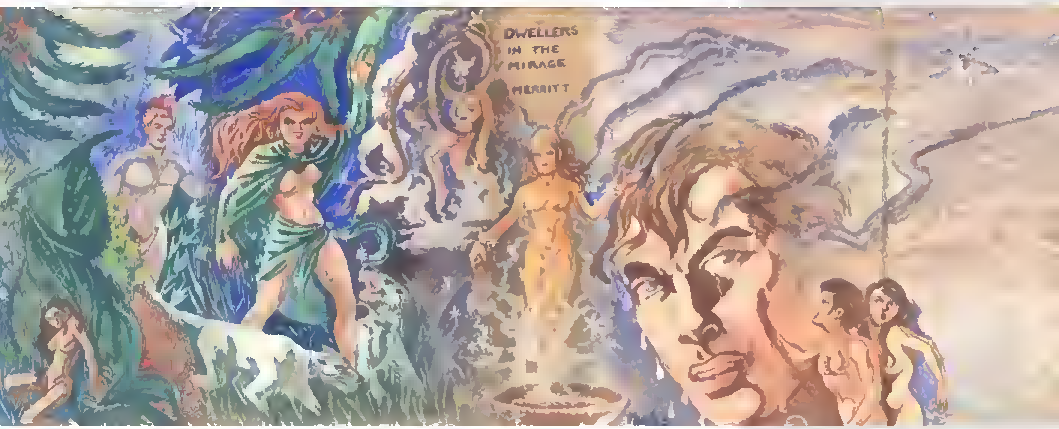
Virgil Finlay



Virgil Warden Finlay was born July 23, 1914 in Rochester, NY.

His father, Warden Hugh Finlay, was of Irish ancestry, and was a wood-lathe worker at a furniture shop. His mother, Ruth Finlay, raised their two children, Virgil and his younger sister Jean. They lived at the grandparent's home at 1220 Clifford Avenue. In 1935, when Virgil was 18 years old, his father died at age 40. This tragic event left the family to fend for themselves during the Great Depression.

After high school Virgil Finlay worked as a house painter and also an assembly-line worker at a radio manufacturer. He sent unsolicited illustrations to his favorite pulp magazine, Weird Tales, and he was soon thrilled to recieve his first payments as a published freelance artist.



Dwellers in the Mirage 1932

Virgil Finlay - "Self Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" Painting Original Art (1932) Virgil Finlay's painting is rendered with the same care that he lavished on his famous ink illustrations This painting is accompanied by a letter from Finlay's daughter, Lail Finley, dated 11-05-99 It reads "This painting by Virgil Finlay done in [1932] is unusual in that the artist used himself as a model In that respect, it could be thought of as a self-portrait This piece was done in [1932] and depicts a "swami" type man holding the fate of the world in his hand As Virgil Finlay was my father, I can state that he rarely used himself as a model, and so this is a most rare painting particularly since it is in color" (Note that while the handwritten text says "1952" rather than 1932, we are of the opinion that this is an oversight on the part of Ms Finlay.) The painting has an image area of 9 75" x 11"

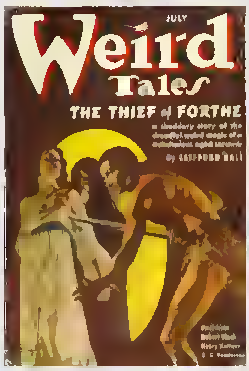
Virgil Finlay Galaxy Science Fiction Magazine October 1962 Painted Cover Original Art (Galaxy 1962) Gorgeous cover painting for Cordwainer Smith s story, The Ballad of Lost C'Mell, has to be seen in person to be fully appreciated The lead characters of this tale included C Mell a cat derived "underperson," and Jestocost, a Lord of the Instrumentality of Mankind This cover appeared on the first printing of the tale, and the painting has an image area of 11" x 12"

Weird Tales – February 1937

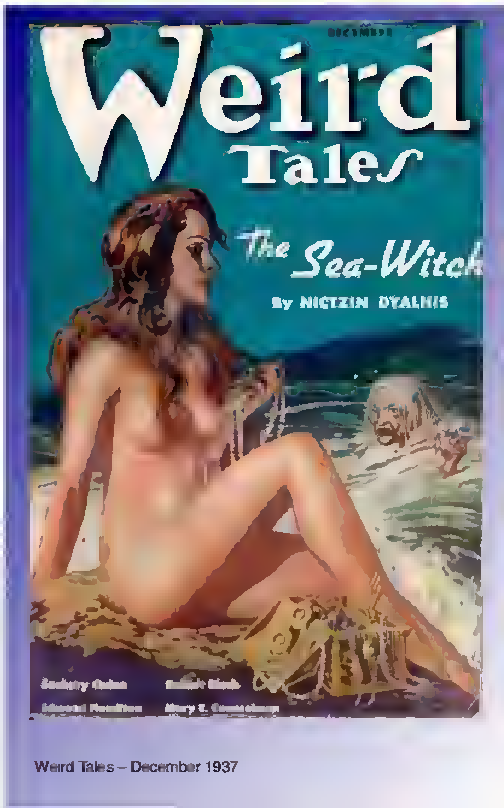
Lady Godiva, December 27, 1933

Weird Tales April 1937

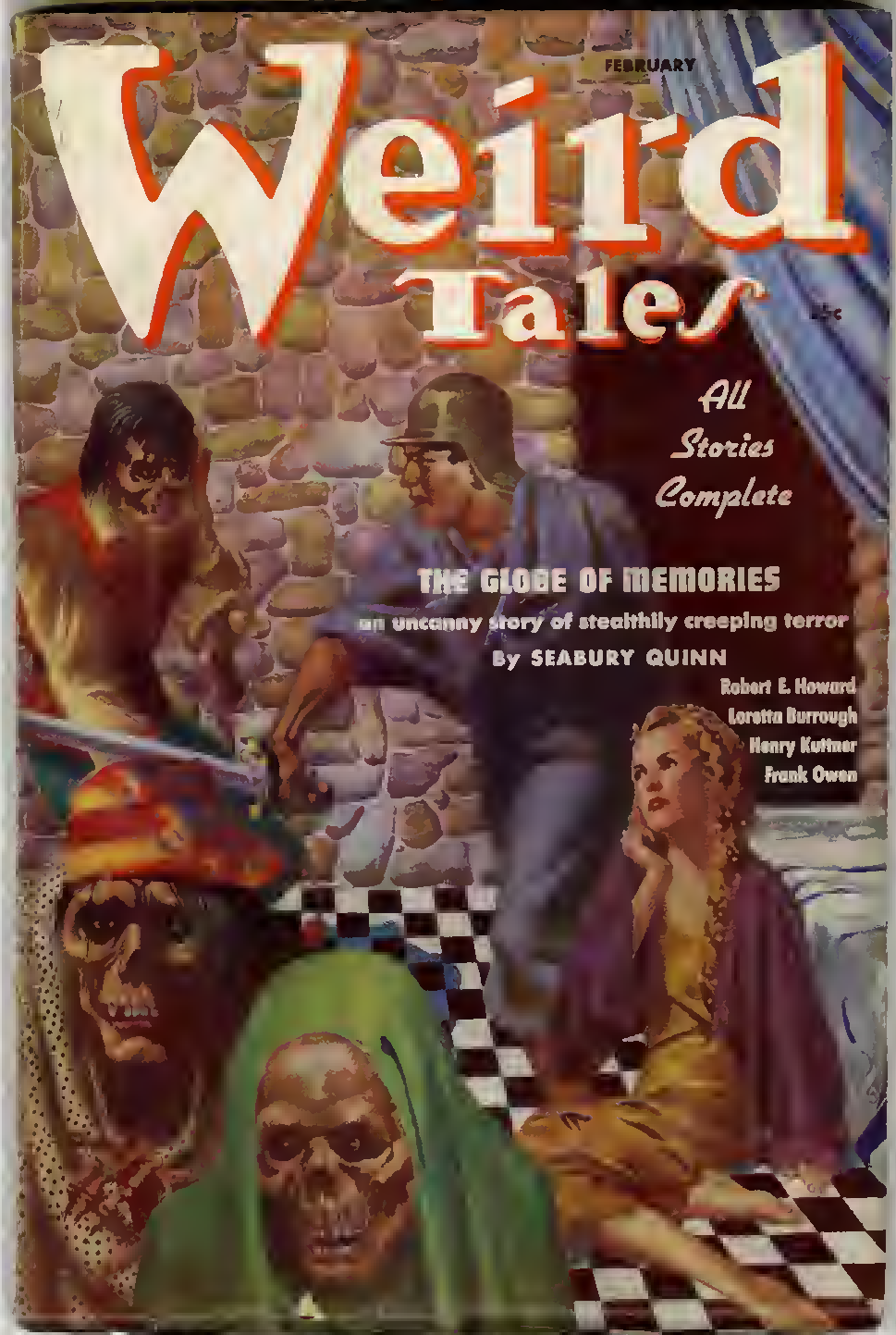
In 1938 he moved to New York City and studied art at night classes at the Mechanics Institute, which is a socially conscious institution created by philanthropists to offer free technical classes to workers and their families.



Weird Tales – July 1937



Weird Tales – December 1937



Weird Tales February 1937 (Popular Fiction, 1937) Features "Dig Me No Grave" by Robert E. Howard Additional stories by Seabury Quinn, Clark Ashton Smith, Henry Kuttner, and Bram Stoker Cover by Virgil Finlay, his first for the magazine

JULY

Weird Tales

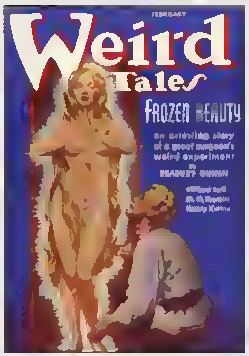
25c

THE THIEF of FORTHE

a shuddery story of the dreadful weird magic of a treacherous aged sorcerer

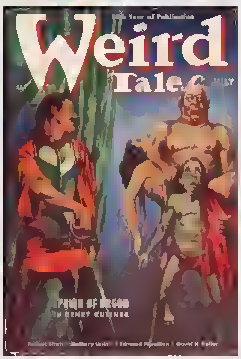
By CLIFFORD BALL

Paul Ernst
Robert Bloch
Henry Kuttner
G. G. Pendarves



Weird Tales – February 1938

Weird Tales April 1938



Weird Tales – July 1938

The Black Drama

By GANS T. FIELD

A strange weird story about the eery personality known as Verduk, who claimed descent from Lord Byron, and the hideous doom that stalked in his wake

The Story So Far

GILBERT CONNATT, the narrator, once a motion picture idol but now penniless, is persuaded by Jake Switz, kindly utility man of the theatrical world, to accept a rôle in the play *Ruthven*, opposite Sigrid Holgar, Connatt's ex-sweetheart, who since her break with Connatt has become a glamorous film favorite The play is being produced by Varduk, mysterious new genius of the theater Other players will include

This story begins in WEIRD TALES for June

"He was going to take the dagger and kill himself, and he could not keep from doing it."

"About thirty years, if the birth certificate is correct."

"And her baptismal name?"

'Lilith Lamereaux."

The man drew himself forward in the chair as he said slowly, "Lilith Lamereaux! I knew a woman by that name; in fact, I knew her rather well. She tried to kill me several times."

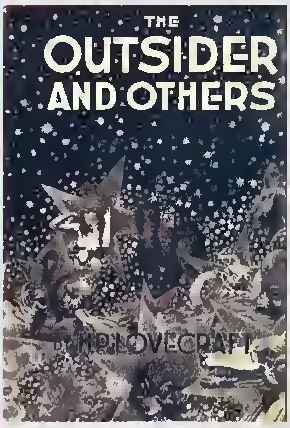
"What happened to her?" asked the lawyer, rather sharply.

"I do not know. Perhaps I do not care. She passed out of my life. I would like to know what actually did happen to her. Of course she did not kill me, only tried to. The fact that I am here today talking to you is confirmation of the fact that she did not kill me. But I will give her credit for trying. Her attempts were intelligent and genuine. I am alive today because I outguessed her. Evidently she was one woman who became discouraged by repeated failures. At least she stopped trying and disappeared.'

'A singular coincidence,' mused the lawyer. "Of course there may have been two women by the same name; but the name is an odd one. We have been unable to find anyone of that name in America, and our advertisements in Eng-

Rafael De Soto about Virgil Finlay :

« He was a great genius in line work. We used to call him the Salvador Dali of pulp Fantastic illustrator, but his cover work wasn't very good. He was a poor colorist. »

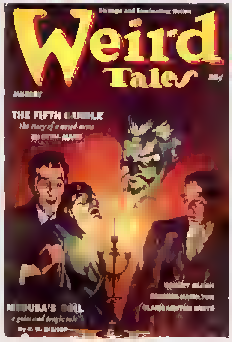


The Outsider and Others--1939

FEBRUARY
Weird Tales
25c
FROZEN BEAUTY
an arresting story of a great surgeon's weird experiment
By SEABURY QUINN
Clifford Ball
M. G. Moretti
Henry Kuttner

16th Year of Publication
Weird
Tales
APRIL
25c
THE
GARDEN OF ADOMPHA
a strange tale of the fantastic sorceries of a dwarfish wizard
By CLARK ASHTON SMITH
Seabury Quinn
Robert Bloch

illustration for the may 1938 issue of Weird Tales



Weird Tales - January 1939

Finlay found steady work illustrating for The American Weekly. He also did interior art for pulp magazines such as Amazing, Fantastic Adventures, Strange Stones, and Captain Future.

He married his high school sweetheart from Rochester, NY, Beverly Stiles, on November 16, 1938. They moved to 55 Cobalt Lane in Westbury, on Long Island, where they raised their daughter, Lail.

Weird Tales – February 1939

During WWII, Finlay served in the U.S. Army as a combat engineer on Okinawa.

After the war, he resumed his freelance art career by creating interior illustrations and cover paintings for Fantastic Novels, Super Science Stories, Thrilling Wonder, and Famous Fantastic Mysteries.

In the 1950s Virgil Finlay worked for digest magazines like Astrology, Famous Science Fiction, If, and Galaxy. He also experimented with abstract art, creating large paintings on canvas.

Weird Tales – March 1939

In the 1960s he worked for Magazine of Horror and even some DC comic books.

Finaly also wrote poetry throughout his life, but it has only been published posthumously.

He died of cancer at age 56 on January 18, 1971.

Original Art Preliminary Painting for Weird Tales - 1939

Beautiful piece of artwork by one of the greatest pulp illustrators of all time, a dramatic damsel-in-distress piece intended for the classic pulp Weird Tales. This piece is taped to a stiffer piece of paper. The second piece of paper has a note on the back reading, " Apr 39 Susette – Quinn" In a different hand, "This is an original color cover preliminary sketch done by Virgil Finlay in April 1939 for Sussette by Seabury Quinn. The writing in pencil above is that of my mother, Beverly Finley, indicating the date this piece was done, and the story it illustrates. Gail M. Finlay 2/09/00" Measuring approximately 7" x 10".

Eery, mysterious, intriguing

Weird Tales

APRIL

25¢

160 PAGES THIS ISSUE

SUSETTE
graveyard tale of French Revolution
By SEABURY QUINN

ARMIES FROM THE PAST
two million years in the future
By EDMOND HAMILTON

THE RED SWIMMER
piracy and the Spanish Main
By ROBERT BLOCH

HYDRA
a horror from another dimension
By HENRY KUTTNER

HELLSGARDE
Jirel of Joiry in a weird adventure
By C. L. MOORE

and other teles

Strange and fascinating fiction

Weird Tales

25¢

JANUARY

THE FIFTH CANDLE

the story of a weird curse

By CYRIL MAND

ROBERT BLOCH

EDMOND HAMILTON

CLARK ASHTON SMITH

MEDUSA'S COIL

a grim and tragic tale

By Z. B. BISHOP

160 pages of eery fiction

Weird Tales

DEC 30

25¢

FEBRUARY

DEATH IS AN ELEPHANT
a thrill tale of the circus
By NATHAN HINDIN

•

THE HOUSE WHERE TIME STOOD STILL
a fascinating Jules de Grandin story
By SEABURY QUINN

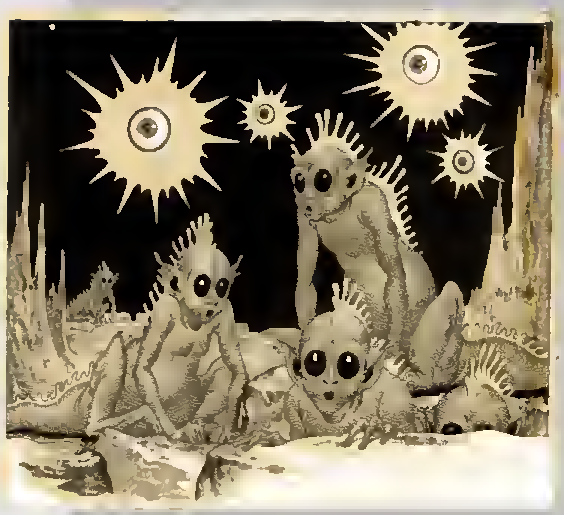
DONALD WANDREI

THOMAS P. KELLEY

CLARK ASHTON SMITH

MANLY WADE WELLMAN

160 pages of unusual fiction
Weird Tales
THE SWINE OF AEAEA
the story of a modern Circe
By CLIFFORD BALL
THE RETURN OF HASTUR
a tale of the Arcana Cult
By AUGUST W. DERLETH
SEABURY QUINN
H. P. LOVECRAFT
EDMOND HAMILTON
and others
Virgil
MARCH
25¢



Original Pulp Illustration for Famous Fantastic Mysteries March 1943 (Popular Publications, 1943) This incredibly detailed little pen and ink illustration by Virgil Finlay was used to illustrate the story "Ark of Fire" by John Hawkins for the March 1943 issue of Famous Fantastic Mysteries (page #37)

The illustration has plenty of white-out along the bottom, and there's a bit more on the floating eyeballs It measures 5" x 4 5" and is triple-matted and framed to an overall size of 15 25" x 14 75"

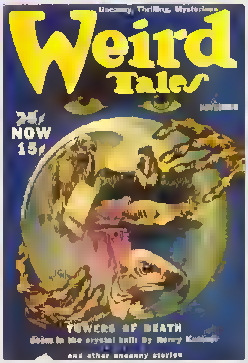
Weird Tales, unused preliminary cover drawing – March 1939

Weird Tales – April 1939

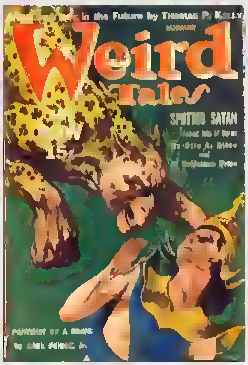
Weird Tales – June-July 1939

Weird Tales – August 1939

Weird Tales – September 1939



Weird Tales – November 1939



Weird Tales – January 1940

for ABRAHAM MERRITT's THE SNAKE MOTHER from FANTASTIC NOVELS – November 1940

15¢

ISSUED MONTHLY

Famous FANTASTIC Mysteries

MARCH 1940

RED STAR MAGAZINE MAR

FLASH The Blind Spot

by Austin Hall *and* Homer Eon Flint

The Most Famous Fantastic Mystery of Them All!

Stories *by* A. Merritt
J. George Frederick
and other well known authors

Famous Fantastic - 1940

15¢
AUGUST 1940
Famous
FANTASTIC
Mysteries
Darkness and Dawn
By GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND
A Great Adventure-Fantasy
The Rebel Soul
By AUSTIN HALL
An Amazing Weird Story

Fantastic Novels Magazine - November 1940

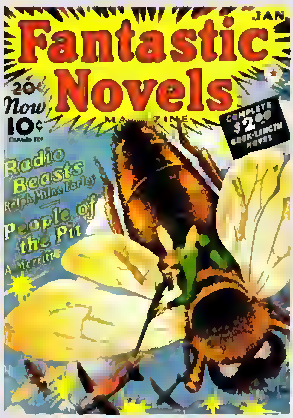
Fantastic Novels Magazine – 1940's

Fantastic Novels Magazine July 1940

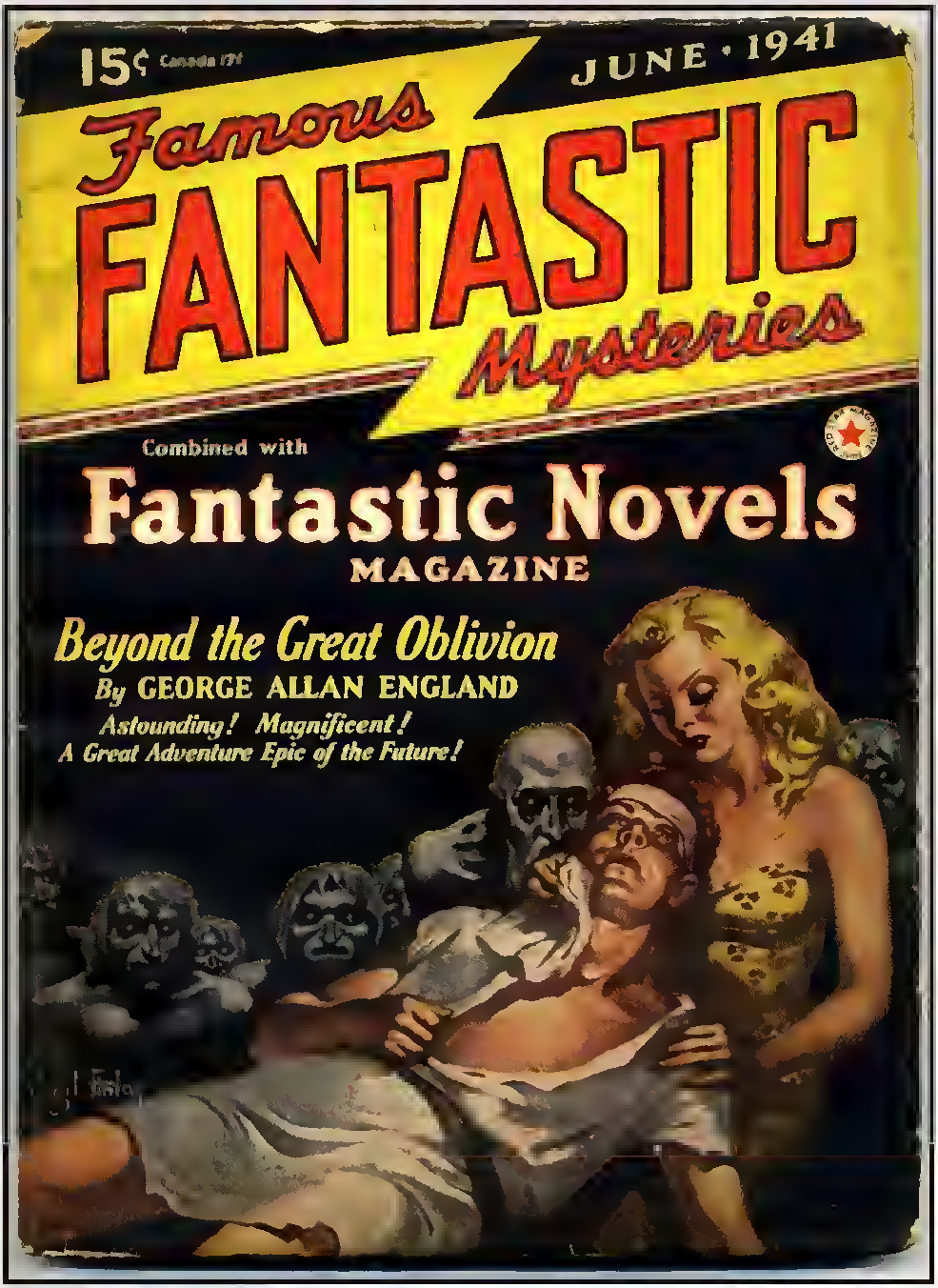
Fantastic Novels Magazine – October 1940

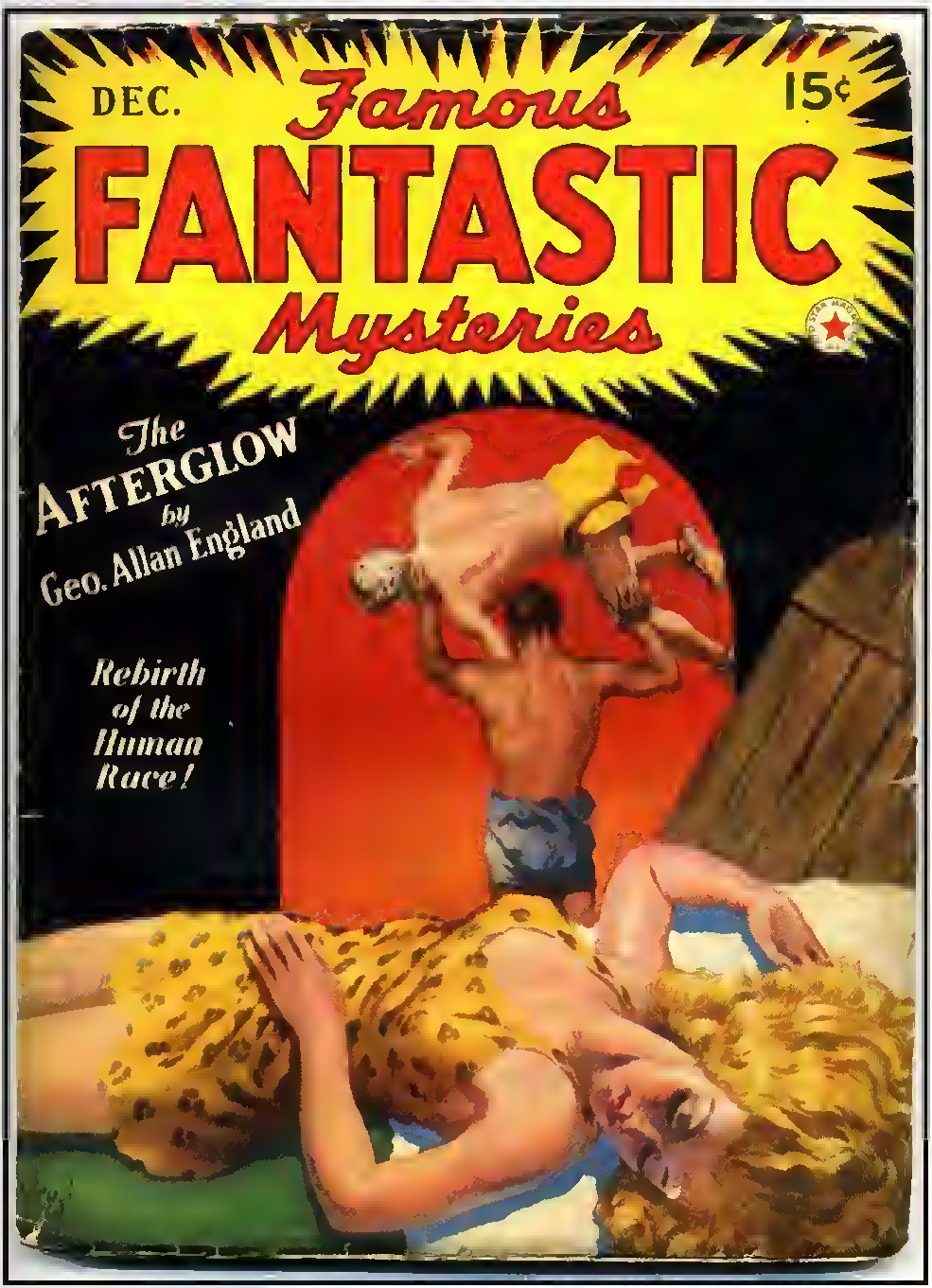
Fantastic Novels Magazine – April 1941

Original pulp cover illustration Argosy Weekly, August 30, 1941

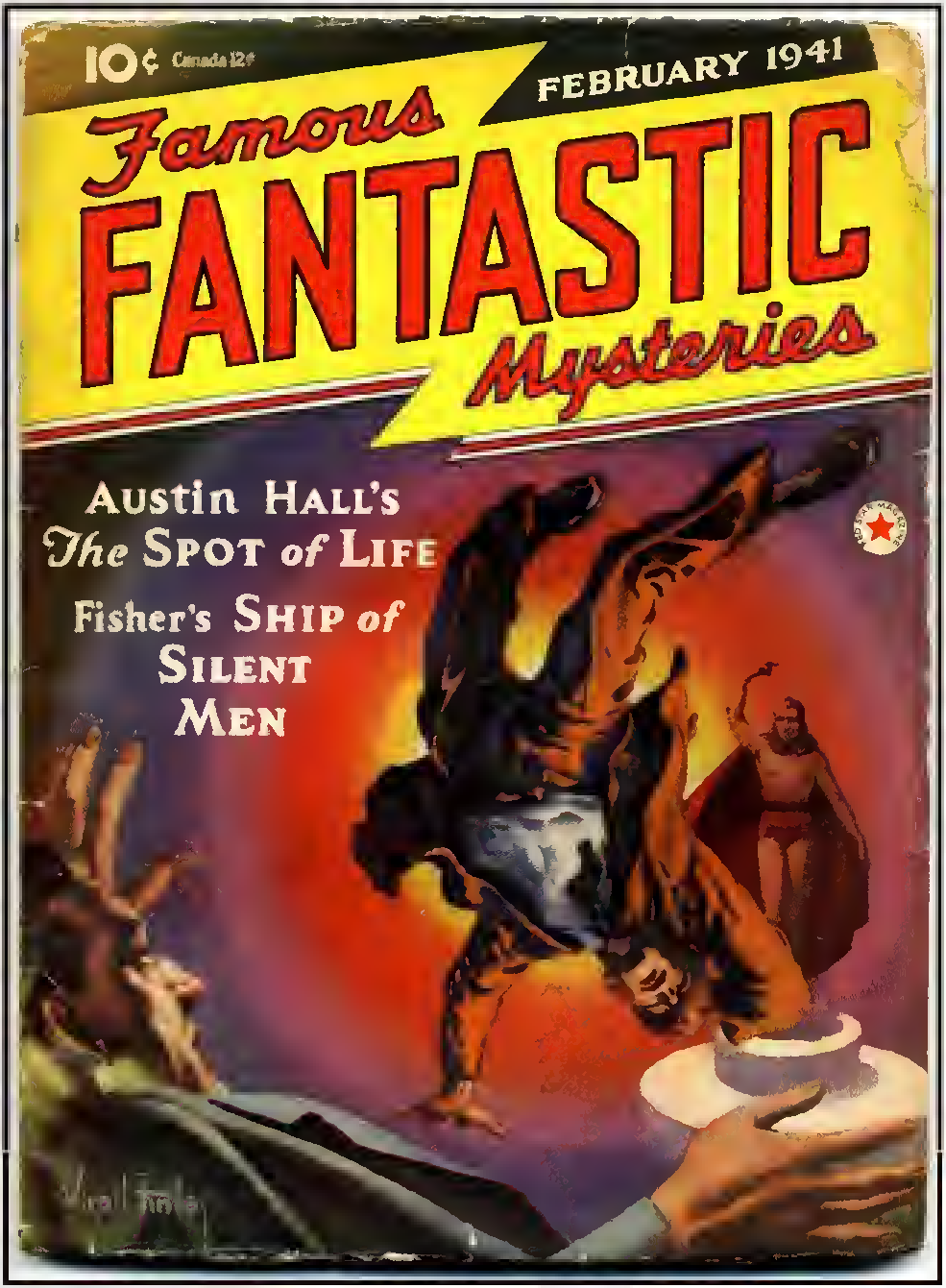


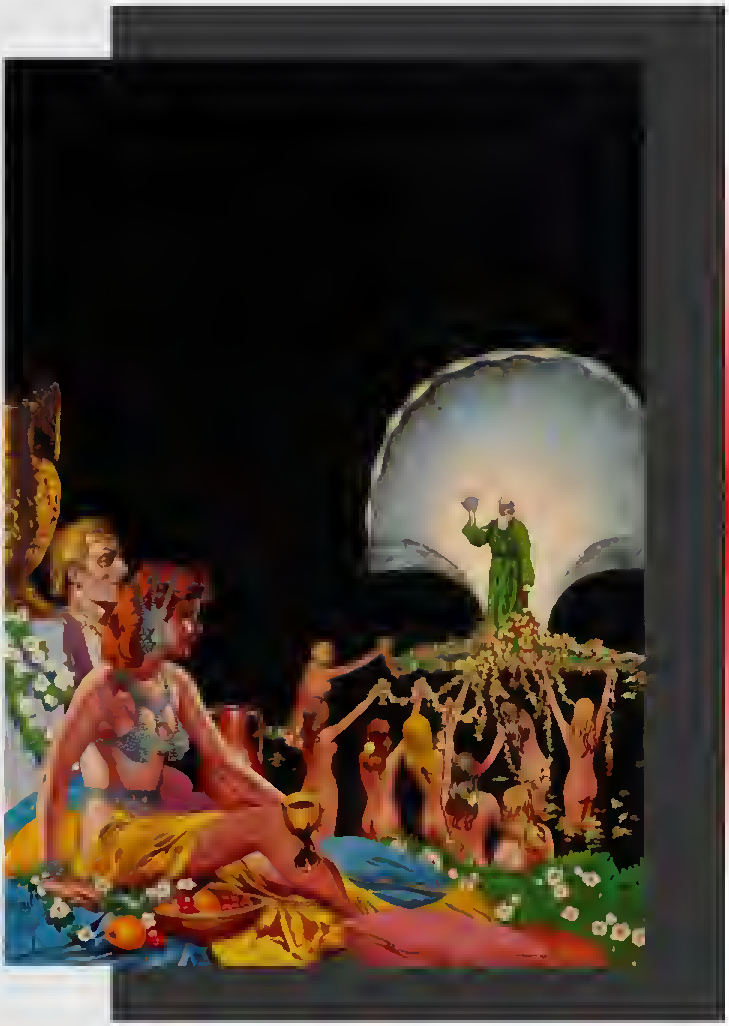
Fantastic Novels – January 1941


15¢ Canada 17¢
JUNE • 1941
Famous
FANTASTIC
Mysteries
Combined with
Fantastic Novels
MAGAZINE
Beyond the Great Oblivion
By GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND
Astounding! Magnificent!
A Great Adventure Epic of the Future!



Famous Fantastic Mysteries – December 1941


10¢ Canada 12¢
FEBRUARY 1941
Famous
FANTASTIC
Mysteries
AUSTIN HALL'S
The SPOT of LIFE
Fisher's SHIP of
SILENT
MEN



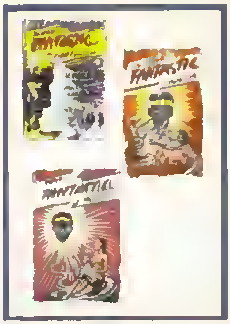
« Pslos of the Dog Star Pack », Famous Fantastic Mysteries cover, October 1941

OCTOBER
Famous
FANTASTIC
Mysteries
15¢
Two of the Greatest Masterpieces of Fantasy in One Issue!
PALOS of the DOG STAR PACK
J U. Giesy
The COLOUR OUT of SPACE H.P. Lovecraft

Famous Fantastic Mysteries / 1941

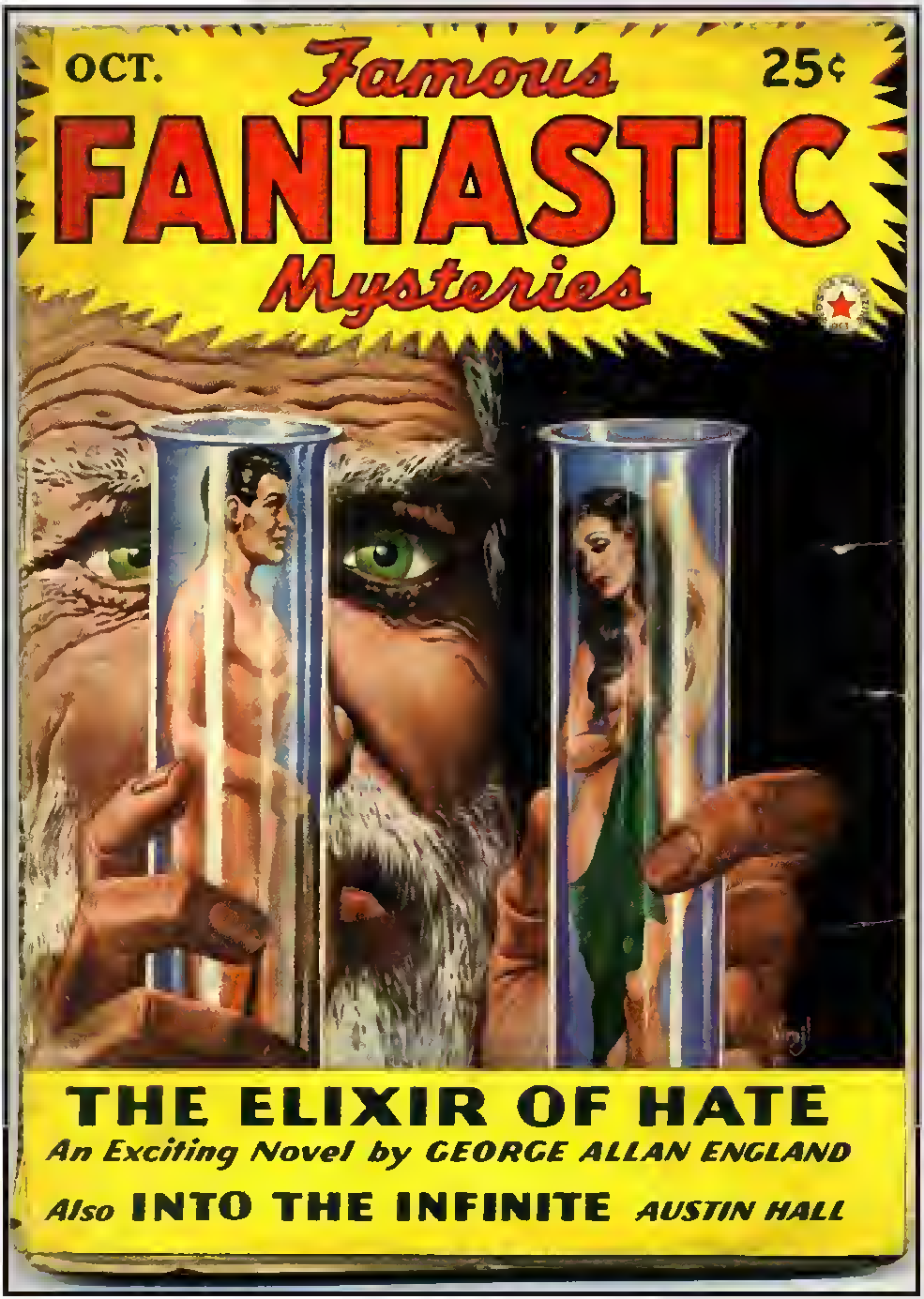
10¢ Canada 12¢
APRIL 1941
Famous
FANTASTIC
Mysteries
CLAIMED
Francis Stevens
VENUS OR EARTH?
Will McMorrow

Planet Stories—Summer 1941



Group of preliminary color sketches for Fantastic Novels

Famous Fantastic Mysteries — October 1942


OCT.
Famous
25¢
FANTASTIC
Mysteries
THE ELIXIR OF HATE
An Exciting Novel by GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND
Also INTO THE INFINITE AUSTIN HALL

Famous Fantastic Mysteries Combined with Fantastic Novels Magazine, August 1942

JULY
Famous
FANTASTIC
Mysteries
25¢
POLARIS --
OF THE SNOWS
Exciting adventure in a fantastic hidden empire beyond the Pole
Astounding mystery of the "dead-alive" house
SERAPION

Famous Fantastic Mysteries - 1942

JUNE
Famous
FANTASTIC
Mysteries
25¢
Burn, Witch, Burn!
A FANTASY OF DEVIL DOLLS BY
A. Merritt
Beyond the Pole
MYSTERY OF THE HORROR-DIRIGIBLE
16 MORE PAGES

Famous Fantastic Mysteries - 1942

FEB.
Famous
FANTASTIC
Mysteries
15¢
BOOK-LENGTH
NOVEL COMPLETE
The Citadel of Fear
FRANCIS STEVENS
The stupendous fantasy of the Aztec hounds turned loose on the modern world

Famous Fantastic Mysteries - 1942

Famous Fantastic Mysteries – March 1943

Famous Fantastic Mysteries – September 1943

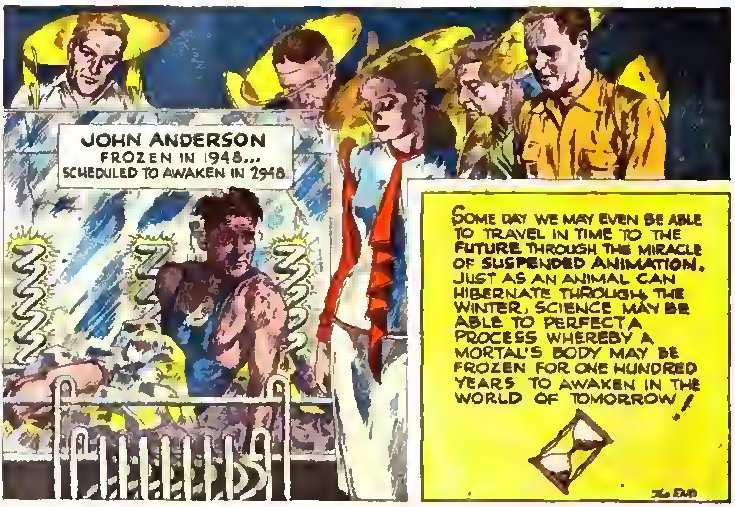
Famous Fantastic Mysteries – December 1946

JUST IMAGINE—
TIME-TRAVELING INTO THE PAST AND FUTURE!
IF MAN CAN INVENT A TELESCOPE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO PICK UP LIGHT RAYS THAT HAVE RECEDED AWAY FROM THE EARTH, HE WILL BE ABLE TO WITNESS SCENES THAT HAPPENED CENTURIES, EONS AGO. THE DAWN OF CIVILIZATION WOULD BE UNFOLDED BEFORE OUR VERY EYES!
THE MOST SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS OF HISTORY WOULD BE RECREATED FOR SCHOLARS WHEN SCIENCE EXPLORES THE PAST TO PROBE THE SECRETS OF TIME. STUDENTS WOULD BE ABLE TO STUDY SUCH DRAMATIC INCIDENTS AS THE ASSASSINATION OF JULIUS CAESAR FROM FIRST-HAND OBSERVATION!

Just Imagine Inserts by Virgil-Real Fact Comics #4 - Tommy Tomorrow - 1947

SCIENTISTS WOULD BE ABLE TO VIEW THE GREATEST TRAGEDY IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD... THE SINKING OF THE LOST CONTINENT, ATLANTIS!

THE SUPER-CATASTROPHE WOULD BE RECORDED BY MOTION PICTURE CAMERAS FOR ALL FUTURE POPULATIONS TO SEE!



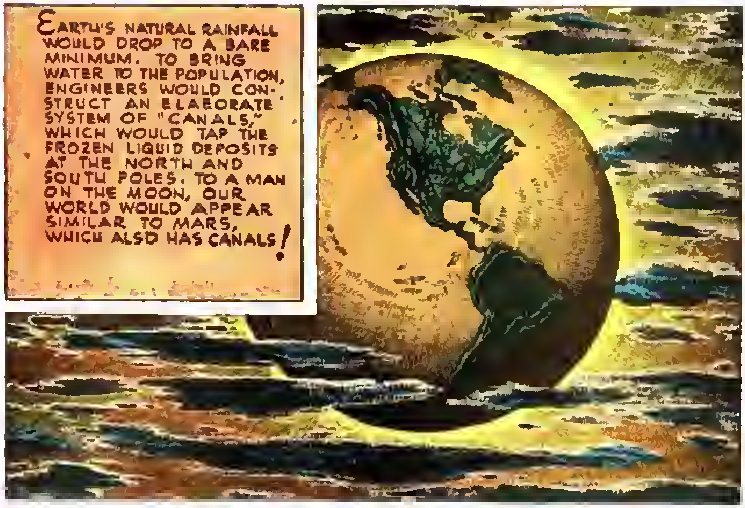
SOME DAY WE MAY EVEN BE ABLE TO TRAVEL IN TIME TO THE FUTURE THROUGH THE MIRACLE OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION. JUST AS AN ANIMAL CAN HIBERNATE THROUGH THE WINTER, SCIENCE MAY BE ABLE TO PERFECT A PROCESS WHEREBY A MORTAL'S BODY MAY BE FROZEN FOR ONE HUNDRED YEARS TO AWAKEN IN THE WORLD OF TOMORROW!

IF THE OCEANS DRY UP!

EONS FROM NOW, SCIENTISTS SAY, THE WORLD'S OCEANS WILL DRY UP. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, MAN'S MOST ANCIENT MEANS OF COMMERCE—SAILING THE SEVEN SEAS—WILL BE GONE. AIRCRAFT WILL BRIDGE THE HOLLOW GAPS BETWEEN FORMER CONTINENTS. THE ATLANTIC EXPRESS WILL TRANSPORT HEAVY FREIGHT OVER A SUBMARINE LANDSCAPE...!

THE DEEP-SEA FISHING INDUSTRY WOULD BECOME AN HISTORICAL MEMORY. OYSTERS, CLAMS, SALMON, TUNA AND ALL SALT-WATER FISH WOULD BE EXTINCT. THE NAVY'S FLEET AND THE WORLD'S GREAT OCEAN LINERS WOULD BECOME RELICS OF THE PAST, ON EXHIBITION ONLY IN MUSEUMS.!

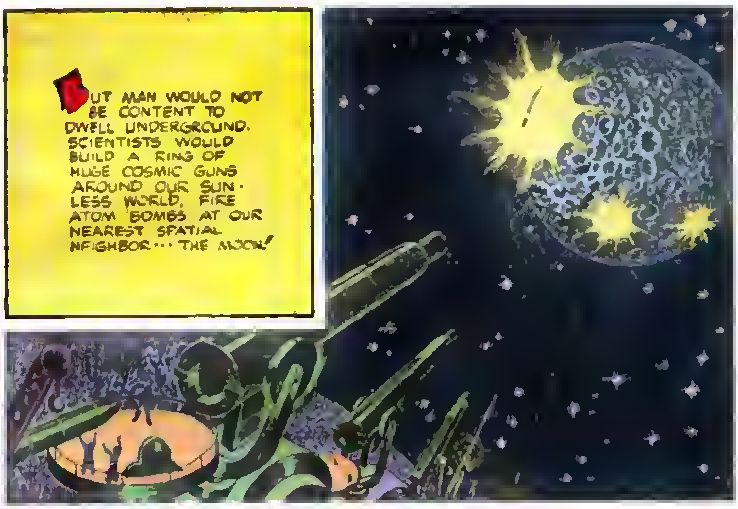
EARTH'S NATURAL RAINFALL WOULD DROP TO A BARE MINIMUM. TO BRING WATER TO THE POPULATION, ENGINEERS WOULD CONSTRUCT AN ELABORATE SYSTEM OF "CANALS," WHICH WOULD TAP THE FROZEN LIQUID DEPOSITS AT THE NORTH AND SOUTH POLES. TO A MAN ON THE MOON, OUR WORLD WOULD APPEAR SIMILAR TO MARS, WHICH ALSO HAS CANALS!



THRIVING COMMUNITIES WOULD SPRING UP IN THE RICH SALT BEDS OF THE OCEAN HOLLOWS. ALMOST EVERY KNOWN CHEMICAL WOULD BE MINED AND QUARRIED. GOLD AND RADIUM SALTS, ONCE DIFFUSED IN THE SEA WATER, WOULD NOW BE FOUND IN CONCENTRATED FORM.

JUST IMAGINE—
...if the Sun went out!
SOME FUTURE DAY OUR SUN WILL BURN ITSELF OUT AND THE ONCE-BLAZING SOLAR ORB WILL BECOME A COLD, DEAD STAR. THE EARTH WILL BEGIN TO FREEZE AND GIANT GLACIERS WILL SWEEP THE CONTINENTS!
MAN'S INSTINCT FOR SELF-PRESERVATION WILL SEND HIM BURROWING MILES BELOW THE EARTH'S SURFACE. TO LIVE IN SUBTERRANEAN CAVERNS WIZARD ENGINEERS WOULD SINK SHAFTS DEEP INTO THE WORLD'S CORE, TAP THE HEAT FROM THE EARTH'S INTERNAL FIRES. PLANT LIFE WOULD BE NOURISHED BY GIANT ARTIFICIAL SUN LAMPS

BUT MAN WOULD NOT BE CONTENT TO DWELL UNDERGROUND. SCIENTISTS WOULD BUILD A RING OF HUGE COSMIC GUNS AROUND OUR SUNLESS WORLD, FIRE ATOM BOMBS AT OUR NEAREST SPATIAL NEIGHBOR··· THE MOON!



IN TIME THE COUNTLESS ATOM BOMBS WOULD CHARGE THE MOON WITH RADIOACTIVE ENERGY, CAUSING IT TO RADIATE LIGHT AND HEAT ACROSS THE GULF OF SPACE. THE MAN-MADE SUN WOULD ENABLE MORTALS ONCE AGAIN TO INHABIT THE UPPER WORLD THAT IS THEIR RIGHTFUL DOMAIN.

Minimum Man, Famous Fantastic Mysteries cover | August 1947

Famous Fantastic Mysteries
August 1947

Minimum Man. Famous Fantastic Mysteries cover | December 1947

Famous Fantastic Mysteries
February 1947

Minimum Man, Famous Fantastic Mysteries cover | June 1947

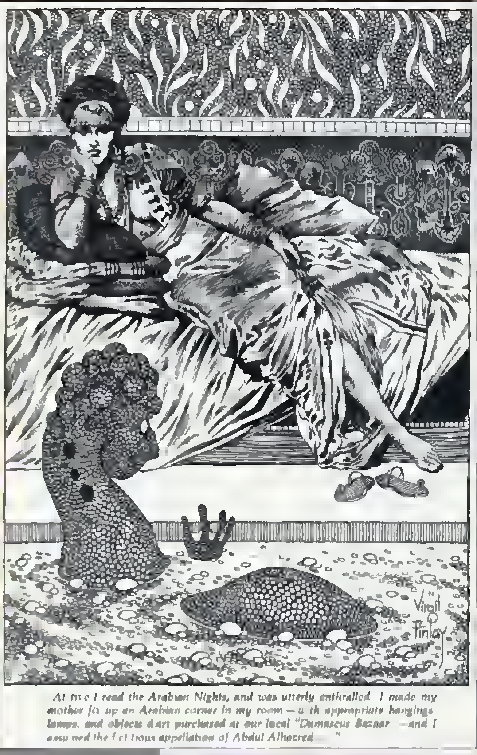
Famous Fantastic Mysteries
February 1948

Minimum Man. Famous Fantastic Mysteries cover | June 1948

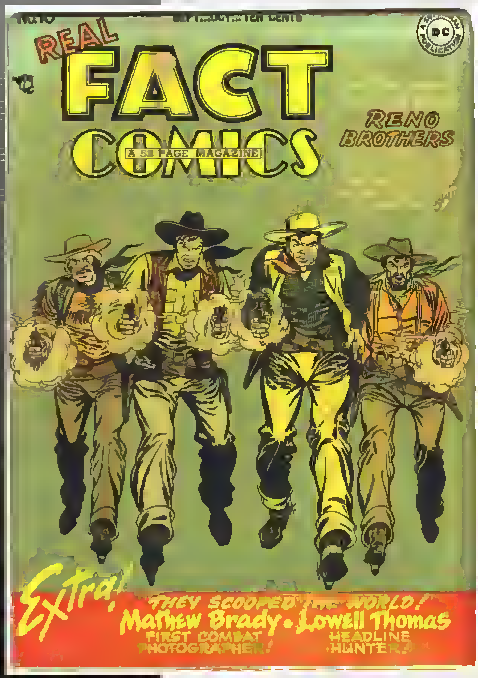
Ec'h-Pi-El Speaks

An Autobiographical Sketch By

H. P. LOVECRAFT



At once I read the Arabian Nights, and was utterly enthralled. I made my mother fix up an Arabian corner in my room — with appropriate hangings, lamps, and objects d'art purchased at our local "Damascus Bazaar" — and I assumed the full Iranic appellation of Abdul Alhazred.



Real Fact Comics – 1987 and 1948

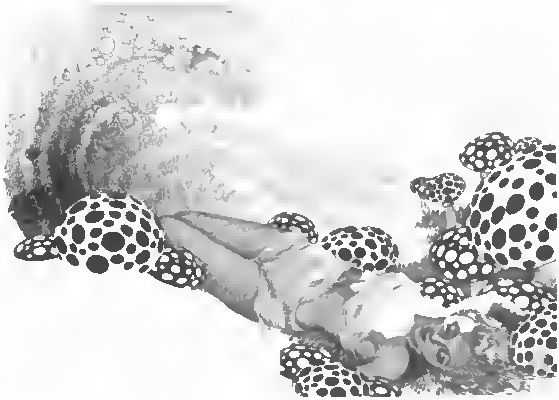
Astrology Magazine Illustration Original Art (undated) This delightful scene was titled "How to Make More Money," and its talented creator must have wondered how he could do the same For years, Virgil Finlay conjured up the most fantastic and dazzling drawings for the fantasy field, for which he was paid the most meager of sums. Finlay exemplified the committed artist who gave his all to his art, no matter the lack of financial reward This stunning piece has an overall size of 12.5" x 9.5"

Fullmoon 1948

Destiny - 1948

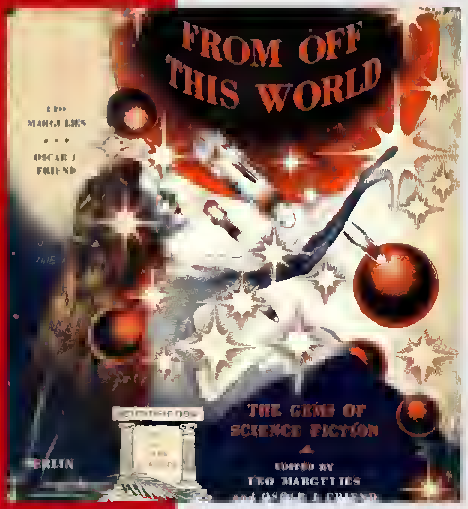
Tiger - 1948

Black Butterflie - 1949



Red Dust 1949

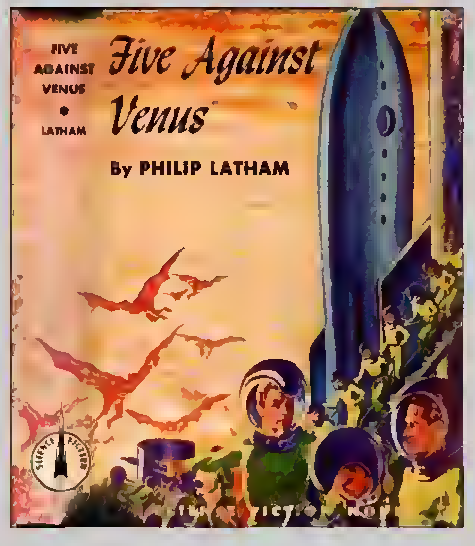
Fantastic Novels Magazine - March 1949



From Off This World 1949

Fantastic Novels Magazine - November 1949

Weird Tales - September 1952



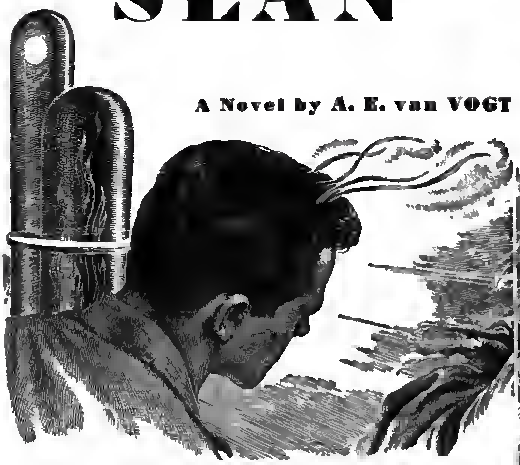
Five Against Venus 1952

Jonny knew Granny had betrayed him

Stan 1952

SLAN

A Novel by A. E. van VOGT



Granny van hurled herself at Joana

They were hunted like mad, dangerous beasts . . . but the telepathic slans were the real inheritors of man's future

I

HIS mother's hand felt cold, clutching his.

Her fear, as they walked hurriedly along the street, was a quiet, swift pulsation that throbbed from her mind to his. A hundred other thoughts beat against his mind, from the crowds that swarmed by on either side, and from inside the buildings as they passed. But only his mother's thoughts were clear and coherent—and afraid!

They're following us, Jommy," her brain telegraphed. "They're not sure, but they suspect. Somebody reported us, and our house has already been raided. Jommy, if the worst comes, you know what to do, we've practised it often enough. And, Jommy, don't be afraid, don't lose your head. You may be only nine years old, but a nine-year-

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exhausted by his brief effort. He was chained to this loathsome bed!

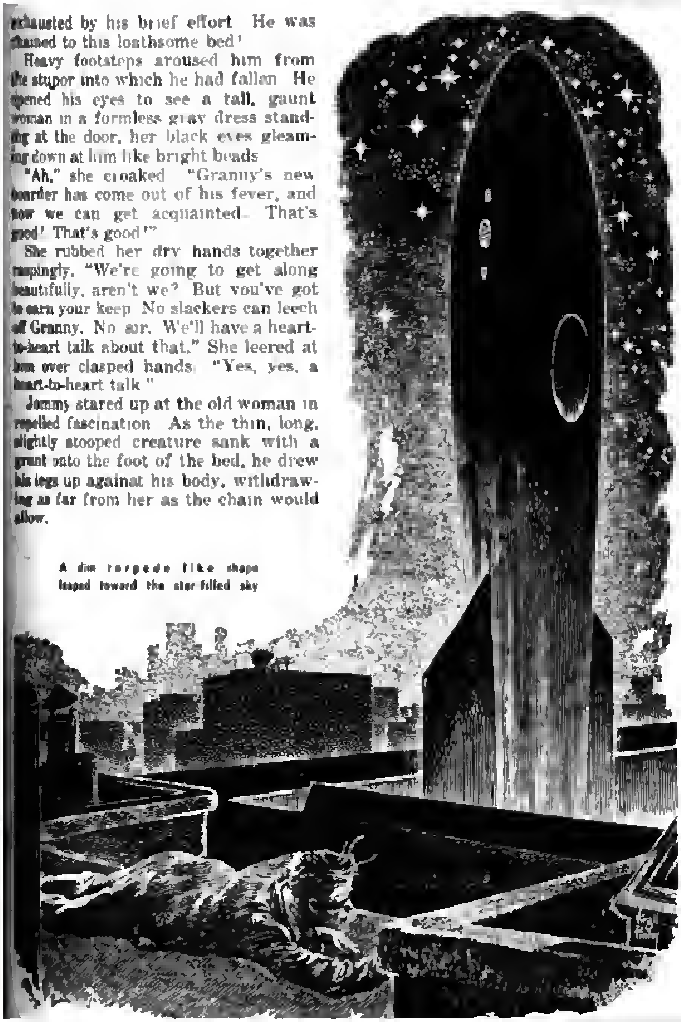
Heavy footsteps aroused him from the stupor into which he had fallen. He opened his eyes to see a tall, gaunt woman in a formless gray dress standing at the door, her black eyes gleaming down at him like bright beads.

"Ah," she croaked. "Granny's new boarder has come out of his fever, and now we can get acquainted. That's good! That's good!"

She rubbed her dry hands together rapingly. "We're going to get along beautifully, aren't we? But you've got to earn your keep. No slackers can leech off Granny. No sir. We'll have a heart-to-heart talk about that." She leered at him over clasped hands. "Yes, yes, a heart-to-heart talk."

Jommy stared up at the old woman in repelled fascination. As the thin, long, slightly stooped creature sank with a grunt onto the foot of the bed, he drew his legs up against his body, withdrawing as far from her as the chain would allow.

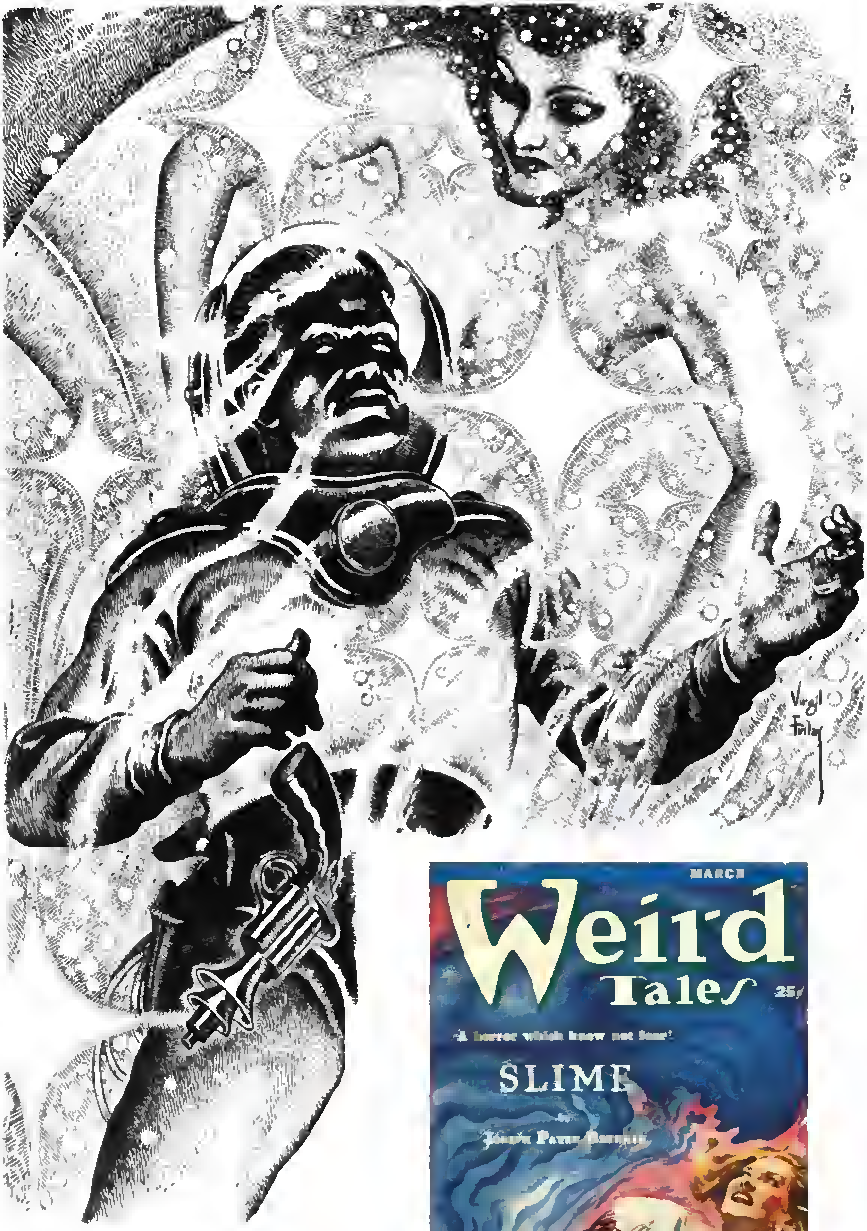
A dim torpedo like shape leaped toward the star filled sky



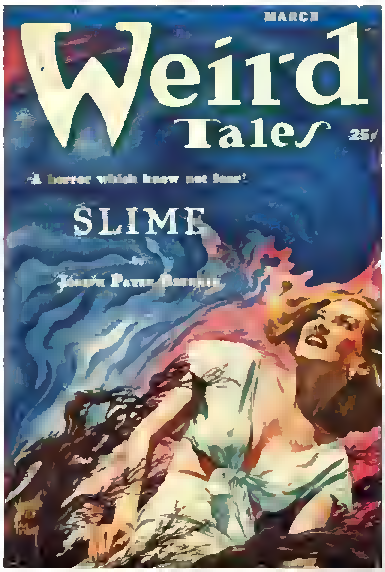
Ship in the Night – 1952

Startling Stories - « The Square Cube Law » - December 1952

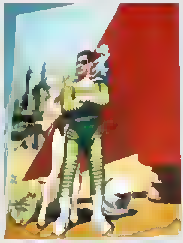
Weird Tales 1952



The Big Jump by Leigh Brackett, from Space Stories - February 1953



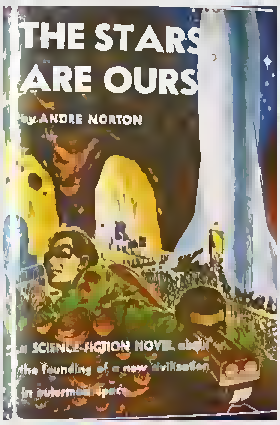
Weird Tales – March 1953



Unpublished

A beautiful Virgil Finlay, this seems to be unpublished. Bob suspects it originally was done for GALAXY magazine but never used

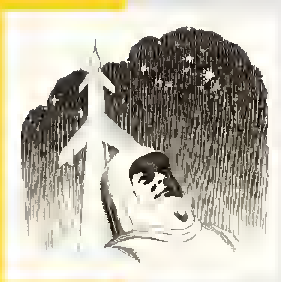
Mystery in Space 1954



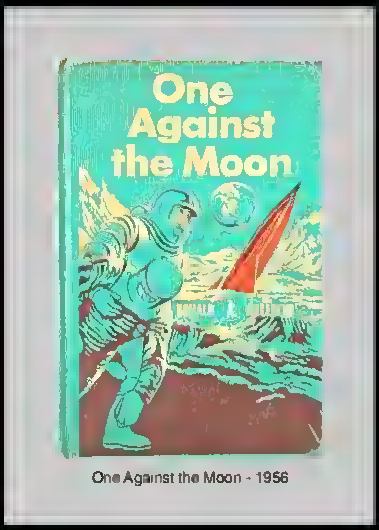
The Stars Are Ours! - 1954

Fate Magazine – 1954

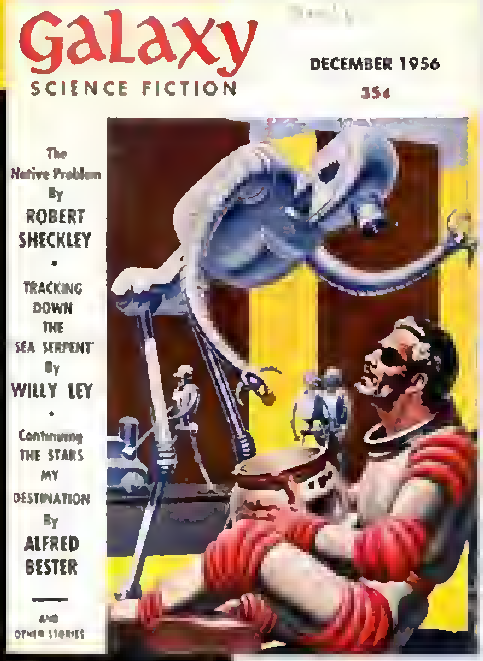
Galaxy Science Fiction – August 1956



Gaul, Albro T Illustrated by Virgil Finlay The Complete Book of Space Travel 1956



One Against the Moon - 1956

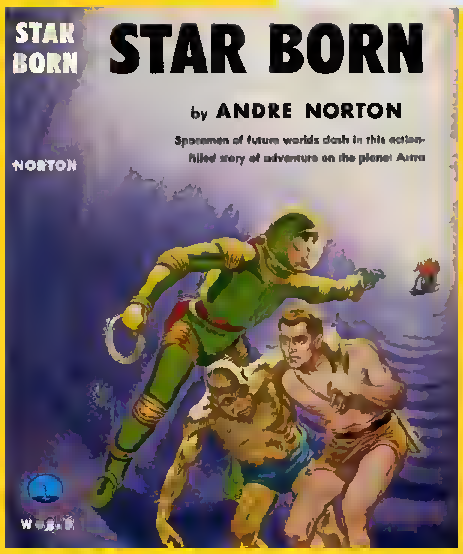


Galaxy Science Fiction – December – 1956

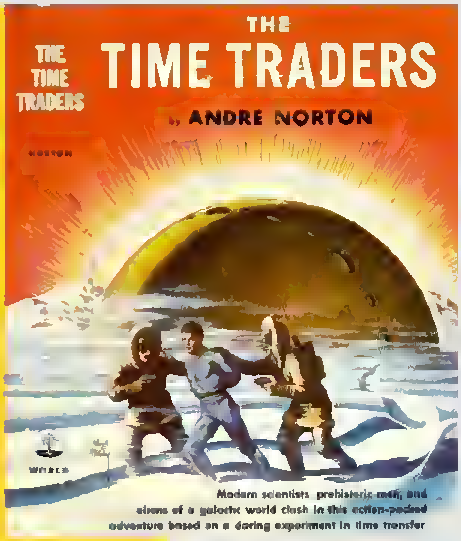
Amazing Stories · December 1957

Galaxy Science Fiction - September 1957

Fantastic Universe · 1957


STAR BORN
STAR BORN
by ANDRE NORTON
Spacemen of future worlds clash in this action-filled story of adventure on the planet Arna
NORTON

Star Born - 1957

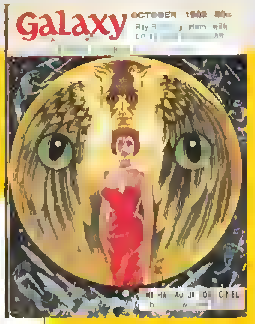

THE TIME TRADERS
THE TIME TRADERS
by ANDRE NORTON
Modern scientists, prehistoric men, and aliens of a galactic world clash in this action-packed adventure based on a daring experiment in time transfer

The Time Traders - 1958

Fantastic Universe August 1958

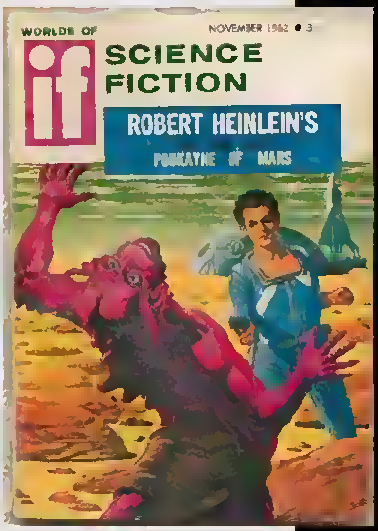
Fantastic Universe - January 1959

If – May 1960



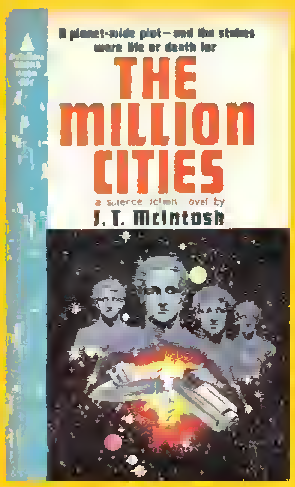
Galaxy magazine
October 1962

Galaxy Magazine,
October 1961



If – November 1962

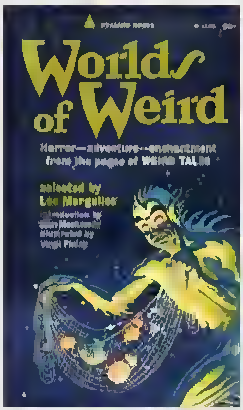
If – March 1963



The Million Cities - August 1963

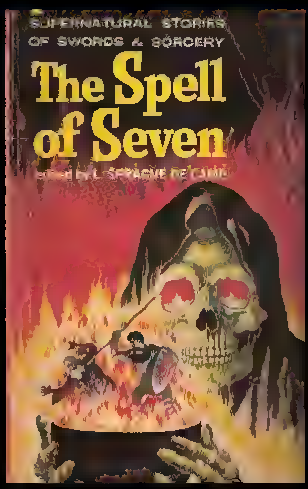
Swords and Sorcery Stories of Heroic Fantasy - 1963

Weird Tales - 1964



Worlds of Weird - January 1965

Amazing Stories - April 1963



The Spell of Seven - 1965

Black & White

Virgil Finlay

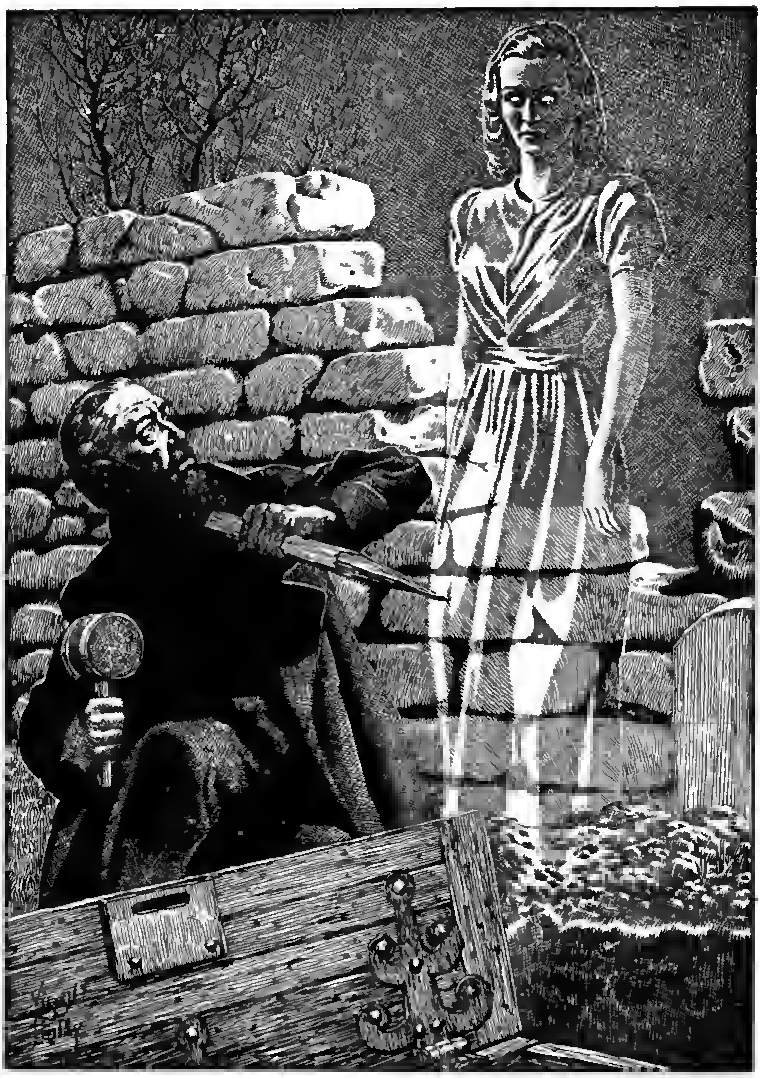
Virgil
Finlay

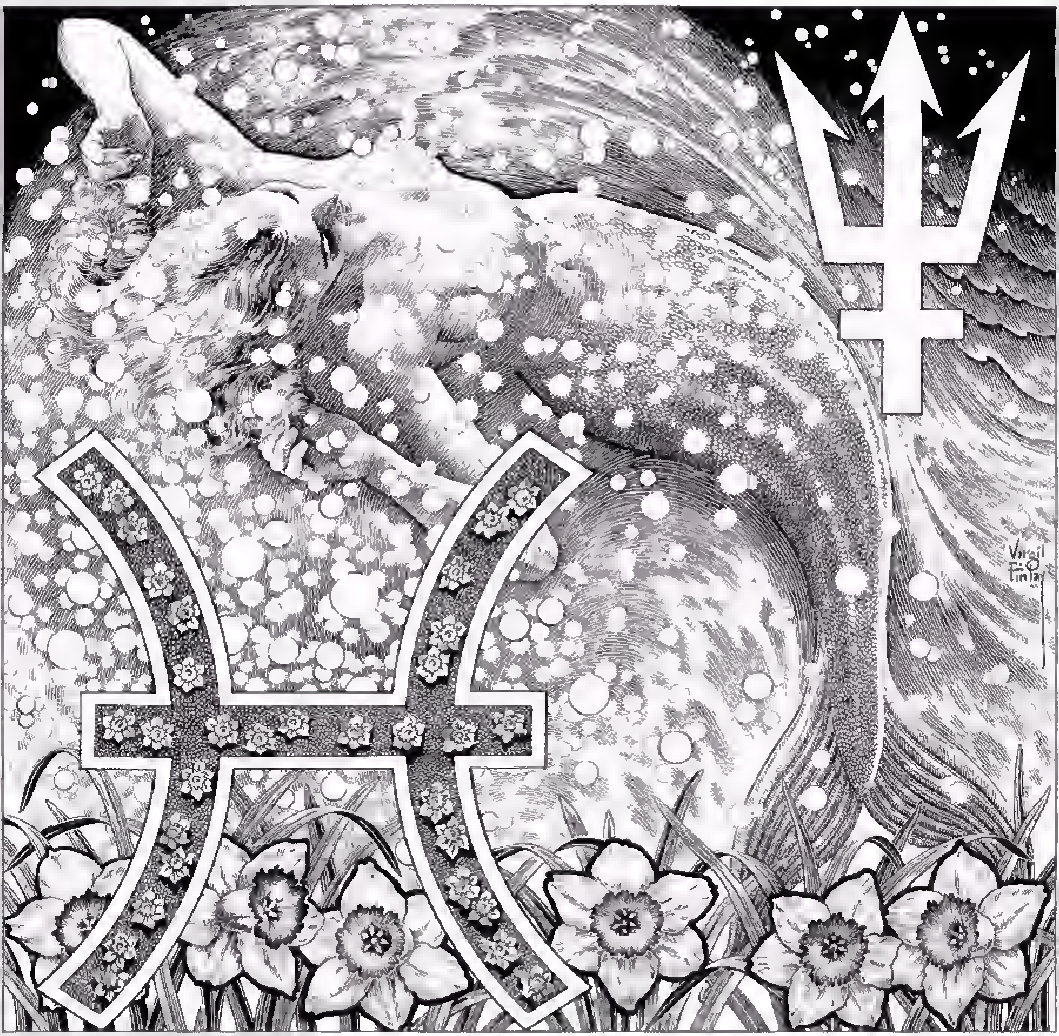
The House Of Iszin

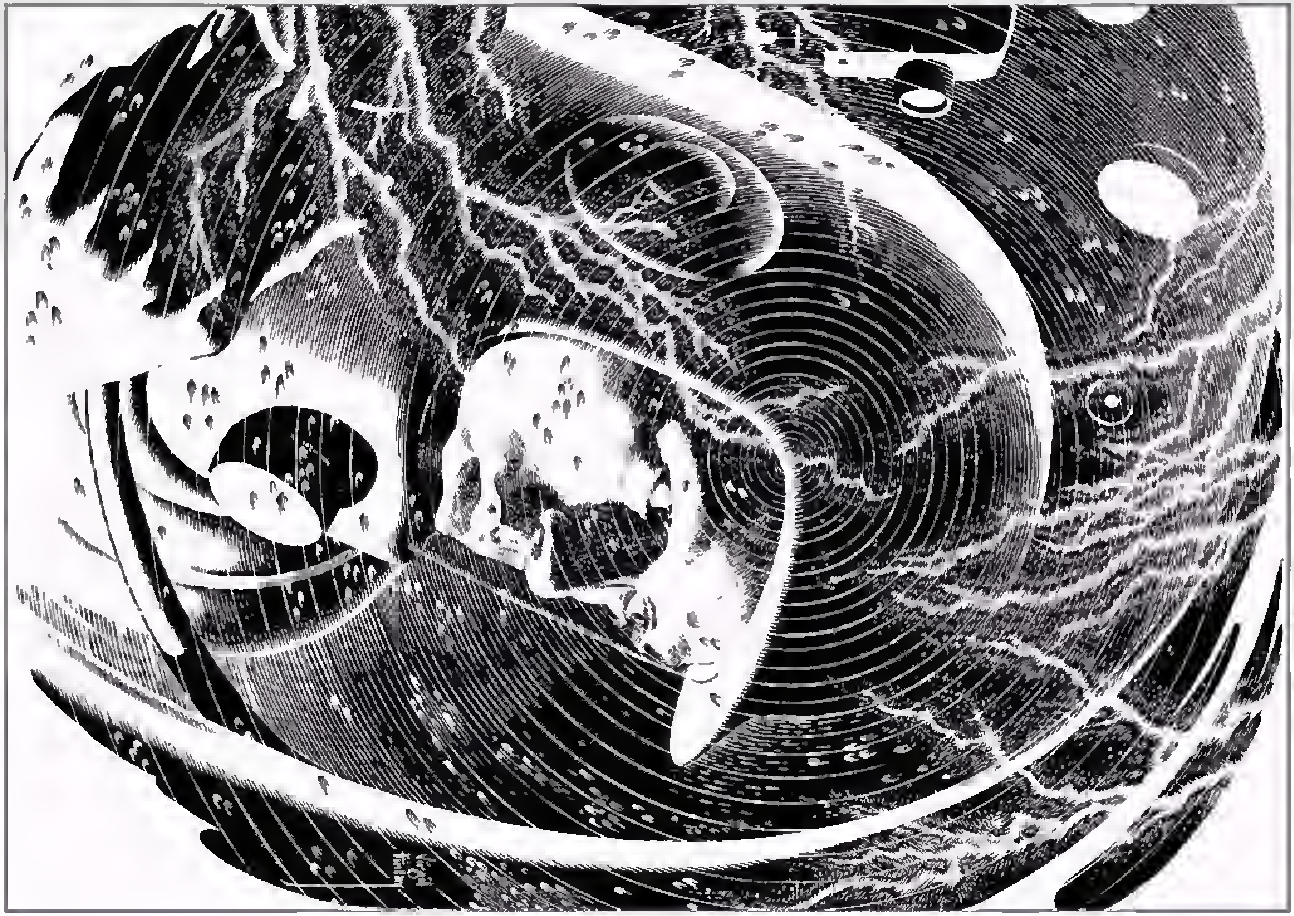
My Destiny Is the Stars, original science fiction magazine illustration

Out of these deadly crystals came a new meaning to life....

The arm of the goddess was long and strong and sure.




Virgil Finlay



Virgil
Finlay

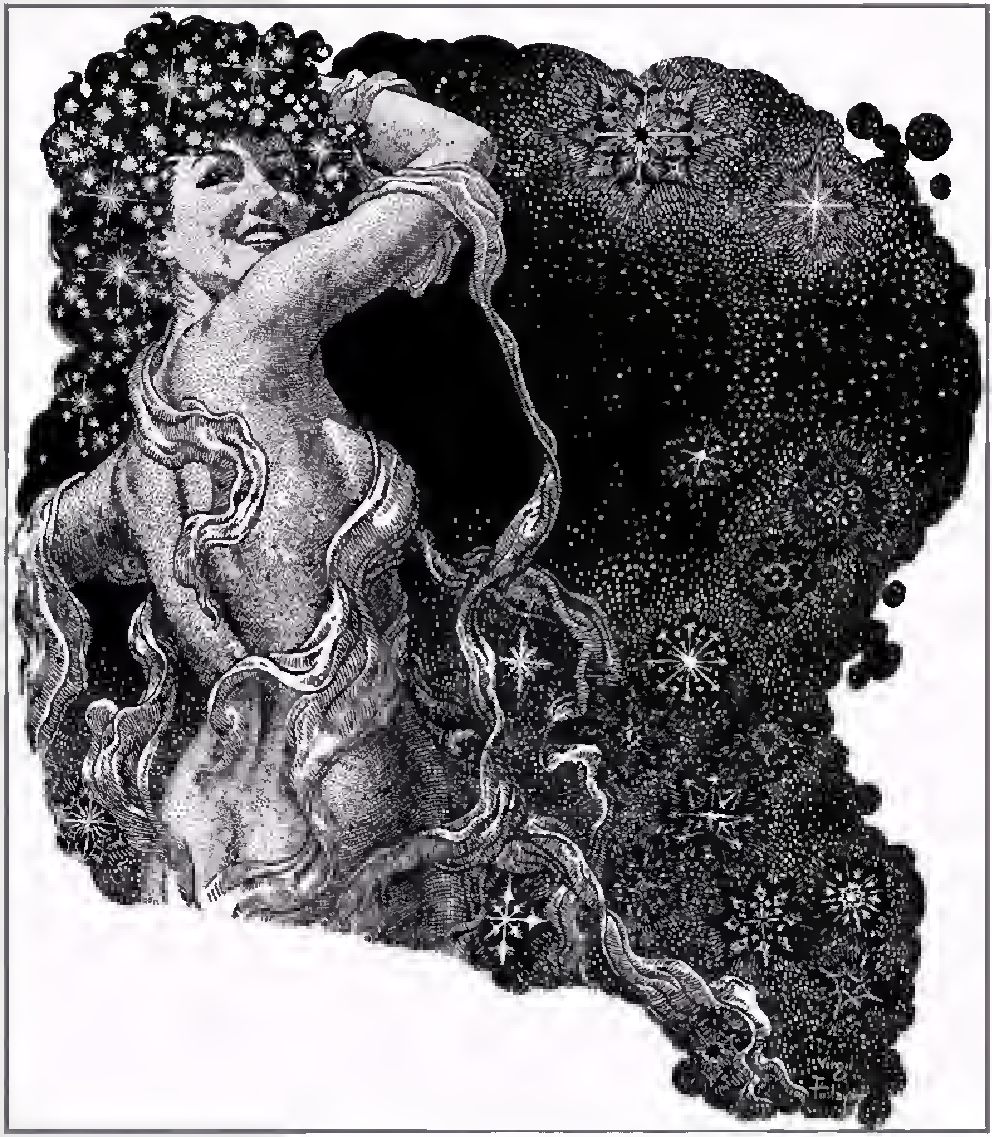
Virgil
Finlay

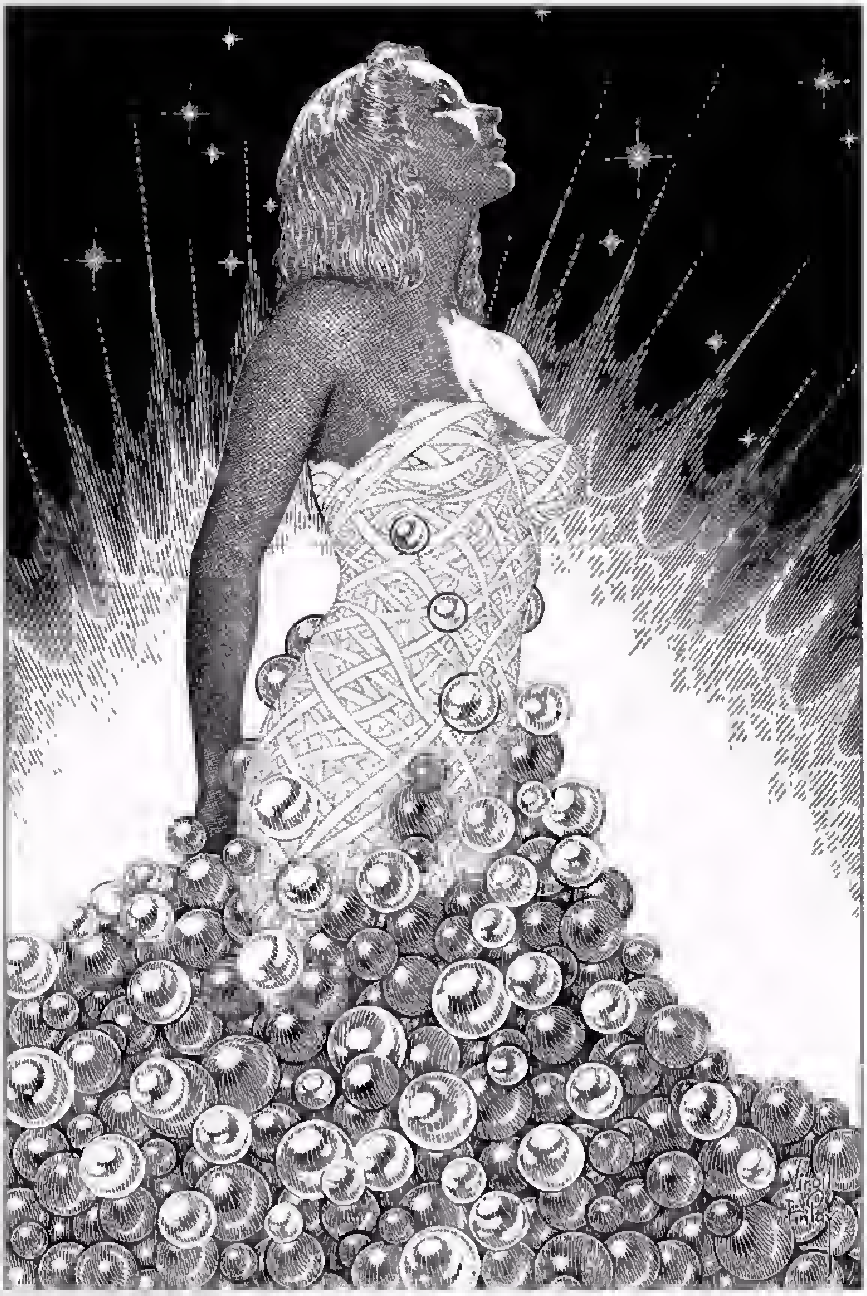
V. FINLAY

Virgil
Finlay

Virgil
Finlay

Virgil
Finlay





Virgil
Finlay

Virgil
Finlay

Virgil Finlay

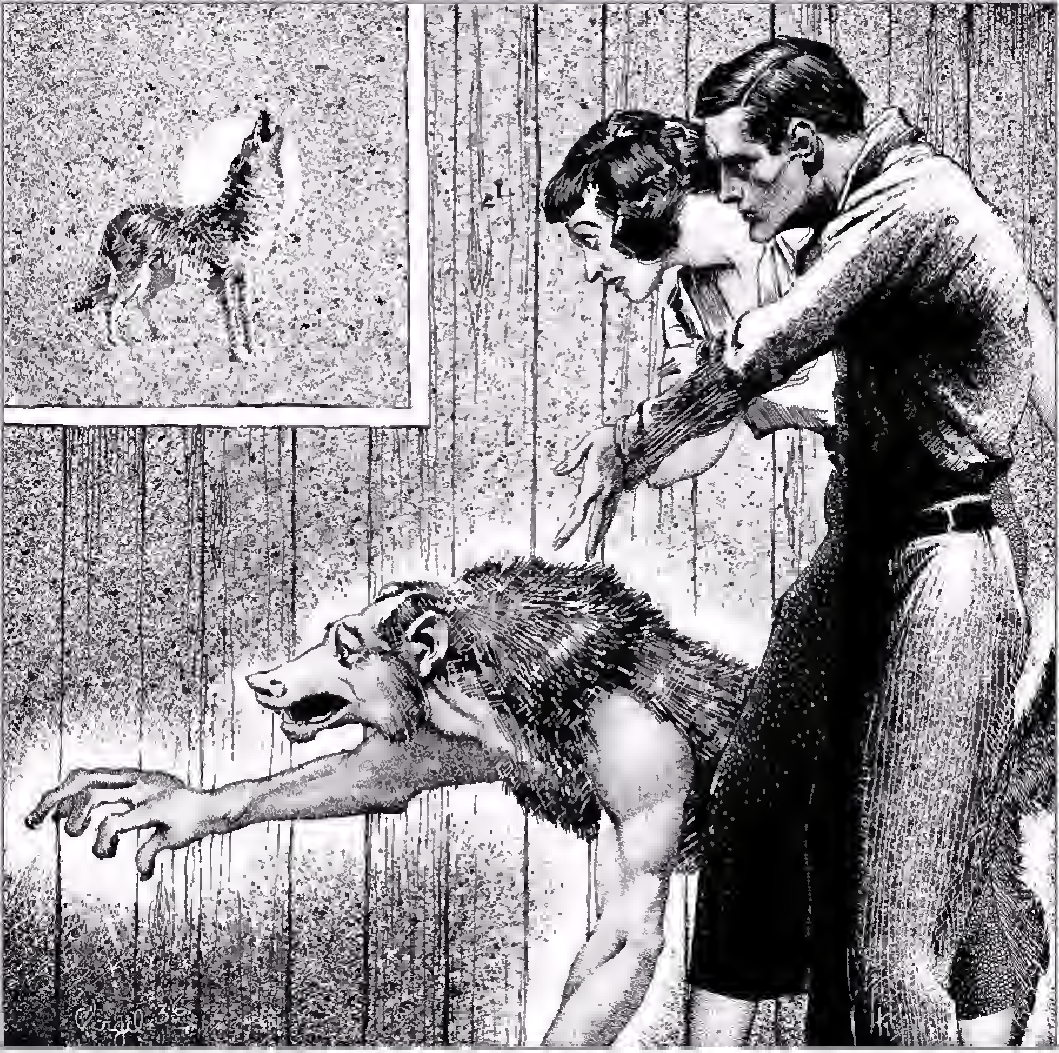
Original science fiction pulp magazine story illustration · légende
A masterful drybrush ink drawing, this eerie image showcases the unearthly and sublime beauty that the inspired Virgil Finlay was capable of creating. His was a one-of-a-kind talent

Janus and Venus-Inscribed Love, to Bill and Ina Chub

CONGRATULATIONS DICK

The Chicago Seed Vol 1 No 1 back cover by Virgil Finlay (Seed Publishing) | 1967

Skull, Science Fiction Digest Illustration Inscribed To Stuart David Schiff a quiet patient for the good doctor



The Woman at Loon Point

Weird Tales's premier interior story illustrator in the '30s, VIRGIL FINLAY (1914–1971) influenced a generation of fantasy artists, who passed his influence along, unheralded, to the next generation. His forever unmatched scratchboard technique melded on the page with his unerring ability to zero in on the most arresting angle in the most compelling scene in the most unforgettable narratives. Without Finlay, our monsters and heroes would never have reached the same extremes of unearthly beauty and unspeakable horror.